

PUGET SOUND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE MINUTES

DECEMBER 2, 2009

MEETING CALLED BY	Clint Muns
TYPE OF MEETING	Advisory Group
FACILITATOR	Steve Thiesfeld
NOTE TAKER	Colleen Desselle
ATTENDEES	Clint Muns, Steve Thiesfeld, Colleen Desselle, Dave Croonquist, Rich Eltrich, Jon Lee, Polly Fischer, Kevin Ryan, David Knutzen, Jim Jenkins, Mike Gilchrist, Pat Pattillo, Ron Warren, and Michael Schmidt

Agenda topics

DISCUSSION	New minutes format	
Is the new format for the minutes acceptable to all?		
CONCLUSIONS	Accepted.	
No negative comments.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Continue with new format	Colleen Desselle	

DISCUSSION	PSRFE Budget Update
<p>Presented last meeting; straw man proposal to cut Hoodspport. Rich had a proposal to switch yearlings at Chambers to zeroes. OC members were advised by email and concurred with this change. So the handout is the production program for this year. We may have to move some things to meet production. Changes from yearlings to sub-yearlings will take place next fall. One item that Steve overlooked was the 300,000 early fry (200/lb.) planted in Steilacoom Lake. With the change to yearlings at Garrison, they will not have room for those fish and will no longer be able to stock those. With the very early release and speculated low survival, it should not have a large impact on returns or fisheries. As we take eggs, egg takes are often not dead-on. There are concerns about fund shifting.</p> <p>During last reduction we took \$30 million reduction. Five criteria in hatcheries which crossed programs. Criteria were to look at efficiencies. Number at facilities and facilities complexities. Numbers showed that we should take staff reduction. We justified keeping them. We can take time to adjust over more facilities rather than into just one due to time constraints.</p> <p>Private organizations are willing to provide funding and services. Public meeting on December 14, 2009, to get some entities to fund Hoodspport and McKernan. Get large volunteer group or organization. Long Live the Kings gave back the \$150,000 they used to supply and it is a huge burden. Gift of water. Need to explore our options.</p> <p>Phil and Joe are working hard to build a stronger relationship between the agency and the Governor's Office and OFM. Possible to expand enforcement authority to other agency lands?</p> <p>A Minor issue that was missed in the budget development – Glenwood egg take was transferred to Minter along with \$6,000 that had previously been used at Samish. Thought was only egg take, but may have covered food. Not sure that we may have missed the need for food. \$210,000 for staffing and rearing of fish. Will make sure the feed is covered under "coordinators" budget and regional dollars.</p> <p>Clint reminded us that the program was "acceptable", but the Oversight Committee still wants the agency to find other funding for Soos Creek and restore the PSRFEF monies to additional yearling production.</p>	
CONCLUSIONS	The budget as outlined is acceptable to the OC, but they don't want to fund Soos and want more yearling production.
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ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Steve Thiesfeld	

DISCUSSION	Audit Update	
	Have received a new auditor. Erin Laska from Bellingham. Proceed with all due abandon to get completed. A flurry of activity is going on since she came on board. When asked to come introduce herself to the group, she agreed, but then SAO decided that they would not come to speak to us again until they have completed the Audit. They feel that the OC is misconstruing their timeframes as promises.	
CONCLUSIONS		
	At this point, if it ever shows up, then we'll look at it and make our comments based on that.	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Steve Thiesfeld	

DISCUSSION	Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan update	
	<p>Meeting yesterday with the advisory committee. Recap – have process. Need ESA coverage for Chinook fisheries (Chinook Harvest Management Plan). Submitted to NOAA. Impacts expected. Submitted last week. Will forward to this group and Pat's email. Handouts - old and new exploitation rate - biggest change between old and new is Skagit previously broken out the upper management threshold (UMT) (mid column) – do we have to have to exceed all three of those before we could have directed fisheries? Set at aggregated 14,500 for the basin. Lake Washington – 15% previous SUS pre-terminal each; new plan is 20% total. We did have it at 20%, but 5% was for cushion. Why change in footer for Cedar River in the new table? Lake WA RER will be very controversial. Nisqually finally have RER – 47%, believe it is a stepped process (3-year period). Their goal is to have weir across the river – stop all hatchery fish from going past a certain point. Exploitation rates have been very high - 70-90%. Skokomish has a new exploitation rate of 50% (from 15%). Will be a challenge to craft fisheries to get down to that level. Looking for support from the Skokomish tribe to have selective fisheries in the river and the marine area. Is the director going to continue to be the negotiator? Unknown at this time. Probably should ask. Pat has been promoted to Special Assistant. Tribes demand Phil's intervention when they feel they are not being heard.</p> <p>When NOAA evaluates our plan for Chinook, they will have to have a no jeopardy call on other ESA critters such as orcas, steelhead, the three potential species of rockfish (we tried to give you a head's up that there is a certain amount of reductions in overall mortality that NOAA will accept). Don't look for savings in regulation proposals.</p> <p>Dan Tonnes, from NOAA was concerned about mooching as a potential. He has looked at the data regarding mooching, and we provided information from test fisheries with selective fisheries, and now he does not believe it is a problem. He recognizes that it is not a very large portion of the salmon fishery. Clint has concerns on black rockfish, but is only suspicions and no concrete evidence. Steve provided Curt Kraemer estimates of rockfish encounters, but told him he needs to provide some additional information and not to distribute it yet. We did have a policy-level meeting with NOAA two weeks ago this Friday. Dan suggested that rather than ban, proposed limit on downriggers to keep gear at 120' or less.</p>	
CONCLUSIONS		
	Time and location would give us a better view of where rockfish and canary are.	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Will get the information out consisting of, at least, where these fish are.	Steve Thiesfeld	

DISCUSSION	Rockfish Conservation Plan
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Proposed listed species: date for rockfish plan has been extended. Anomaly in data: 338 canary rockfish annually, 171 came from an angler landing at Zittels, and he released two canary rockfish. Extrapolation of data is huge and sample size not adequate to having real meaning to those numbers. This example shows that Department data is not as good as it will need to be regarding rockfish. Need short-term plan until they can get better data. Understanding that data is in pipeline, but not available. We need to match phone surveys to dock surveys. When matching these, the numbers change slightly. Overall confidence is not high, because these are rare events that occur out of a catch that is huge. NOAA says we need to ask how deep they're fishing and what they are fishing with. When caught as incidental, they want photos of red rockfish taken and Greg or Wayne to ID the species. Need to explore how to increase reliability of data available? Suggest that we have a chart with good photo guides of what the different species look like to be posted on boats. Anglers are starting to just say they didn't catch anything. It is an extremely small amount of anglers doing this. It is picking up due to the issues as a rebellion to regulations. We need to be able to trust the data we are given. It is very visible to folks looking to throw rocks at our programs. What is NOAA using for their data? They have all of the data that is in the rockfish plan, and also looked at camera and remote data. It is not just Department data, but additional data for the abundance estimates. Believe we need to reevaluate for improved data. Because we don't have sufficient data, we should make the original plan short-term (1-2 years), or pull back and wait for more accurate and updated data. Put certain plans in effect but adjust as needed. Of the impacts, what is the Pinniped and derelict gear impacts to the certain species? Adopt some fishing regulations that protect these species on an interim basis, and then develop the plan later when we have more sufficient data. It is believed that NOAA will accept regulations in lieu of management plan.

The draft plan is out, but not substantive as to what the plan is going to accomplish. Propose no retention of rockfish and use the 20 fathom rule.

Submitted Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management plan for five years, but indication is that two years is what NOAA wants to evaluate at this point. Tribes pushed for a 10-year plan.

What is lingcod predation on rockfish? Gut contents study found the species "Puget Sound rockfish" – Sebastes and ... (small). Not able to decipher some of the content. Suggest shift of coastal rockfish research to PS.

CONCLUSIONS	
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Rockfish plan in and of itself is not what NOAA needs. They just want us to protect the species of concern. However, the Department will move forward on the Rockfish Conservation Plan because we have responsibilities to manage all rockfish, not just the listed ones.

Did the Department prepare a report of rockfish research and stock assessment program to legislature in 2008? RCW 77.12.702, December 2010. How much license sales \$ contributed? Ask Michele Culver if some of the funding could be shifted according to the WAC wording.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Need an update on RCW 77.12.702	Steve	Next Meeting

DISCUSSION	Lingcod
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Releases. Schedule done and planned. Decided to have same month comparison. Mobile tracking yesterday, again tomorrow, and continuing as long as we are getting good reads while the tags are on. Do the creel checkers need to be looking for tags? Should we CWT the lingcod that are being tagged? At what point do we get concerned they may get into the fishery?

CONCLUSIONS	
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ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Jon Lee	

DISCUSSION	Les Johnson
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Les Johnson was nominated to the board last December. Bruce Arnold has resigned. Les had not made it to several meetings. Had a stroke just previous to the meeting in September. Talked to Craig Burley about the fact that we are down a couple of people. Asked Les' wife if he is still interested to continue. Did not get a response. OC would like to have it stay as is through the year. Les might be able to make it back. Felt that we usually maintain the quorum with Bruce resigned, four is the quorum. This is a low priority at this point.

CONCLUSIONS	
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We usually maintain the quorum. With Bruce's resignation, four is the quorum. This is a low priority at this point. We will put on the back burner for now.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	Clint Muns	

DISCUSSION	Sport Rules	
	Advisory body to support certain proposed sport rules.	
CONCLUSIONS		
	Word in a conducive way to present to the Commission.	
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Clint to testify at Commission Meeting on behalf of OC	Clint Muns	
OBSERVERS	N/A	
RESOURCE PERSONS		
SPECIAL NOTES	Adjourned: 8:42 p.m. Next meeting March 2 in Olympia to coincide with North of Falcon meeting.	